

# Forests and Human Health: Strengthening the Impact of Science and Policy Initiatives in the United States

IUFRO Division 6 Presentation By:  
Dr. Steve Selin, Professor  
Division of Forestry & Natural Resources  
West Virginia University  
[sselin@wvu.edu](mailto:sselin@wvu.edu)

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# Introductory Remarks

- Timely and compelling problem area
- USDA Strategic Planning Process
- Outdoor Recreation Research & Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Defining National Direction and Building Capacity
- Outdoor Recreation, Human Health, and Wellness Theme

# USA Context

We have a health problem!!

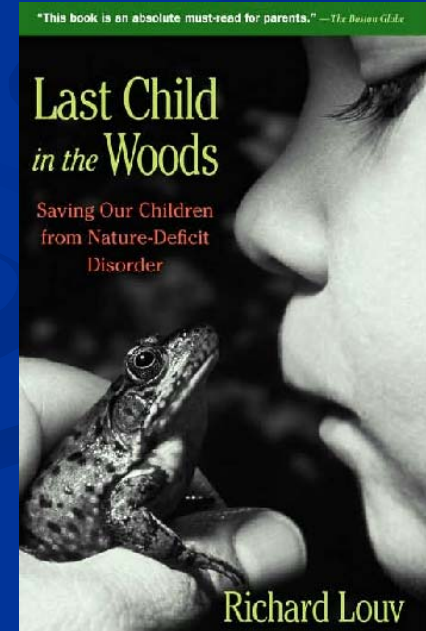


# USA Context

- # of overweight Americans has increased >60% in last 10 years
- 2 of 10 children are obese
- Children average 30 hrs of TV & computer per week
- Decline in National Park & National Forest visitation
- Forest-base experiences are important
- Also transportation, community design, educational, and health care issue

# Grassroots Political Movement

- Last Child in the Woods (Richard Louv)
- “It’s where the electrical outlets are!”
- Congressional Testimony. .Nature-deficit disorder/Recreation and Active Living
- State & National Policy Forums
- Federal Agency MOU
- Leave no Child Inside!!



# Recent Health Forums & Programs



## CHILDREN & NATURE A National Dialogue for the Health and Well-Being of Our Children

September 2006 *A Leadership Report*  
by the CHILDREN & NATURE  
NETWORK

*In September 2006, the National Dialogue on Children and Nature was hosted by the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, W.Va. The goal was to bring together Americans from as many sectors as possible, and to ask them for their ideas on how to get kids outside again.*

*The conference drew some 350 people from around the country, including academics, educators, health care experts, residential developers, urban planners and representatives from companies such as REI and Disney. Government and nonprofit conservation agencies, and other groups, also sent representatives.*

## National Park Service

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



### Learn about our health initiative



### PATHWAYS TO HEALTHY LIVING

#### Promoting Physical Activity In Parks and Communities

Close-to-home recreation on neighborhood trails and greenways, and in National Parks, is vital for improving America's public health. The National Park Service is ideally positioned to respond to this urgent need to increase Americans' level of physical activity.

#### Health Projects

#### More About Health

#### Publications/Online Resources

Through its Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, the National Park Service has launched a nationwide initiative to encourage healthful outdoor physical activity in National Parks and local communities to demonstrate practical approaches for public land managers and community leaders who want to encourage active lifestyles.

## Children & Nature Network

Building a Movement to Reconnect Children & Nature



### Join the Network

#### HOME

- News Center
- Newsletter
- Research & Studies
- Leadership Report
- Speakers
- Sponsors
- the Movement
- the Network
- the Book

### NETWORK NEWS - AUG

#### TOP STORIES



#### TAKE IT OUTSIDE: Schools encouraged to connect curriculum to nature

Michigan school districts are being encouraged to add curriculum and participate in programs that promote outside activities.  
[+] read more

#### Beebe: Arkansas should be leader in environmental education

Arkansas youngsters are within easy reach of nature wherever they are -- streams and lakes and rivers and hiking trails and outdoor opportunities. "Arkansas can and should be a leader -- it's our motto, the Natural State -- to encourage our young people to be able to get out and enjoy the outdoors," said Gov. Mike Beebe, speaking at a teachers' workshop on environmental education.  
[+] read more

# Recent Health Forums & Programs

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

About Us Program Areas Grant Applications Publications & Research Gra

Childhood Obesity

Program Areas > Childhood Obesity > Newsroom > Features

Overview  
What We Fund  
Team Members  
National Programs  
Active Grants  
Funding Opportunities

Publications by Type  
Charts & Data  
Evaluations and Grant Results  
Meeting Publications

**Foundation Commits \$500 Million to Reverse Childhood Obesity**

*About 25 million kids and teens in the United States are overweight or obese. Unless we take action now to reverse this alarming trend, we're in danger of raising the first generation of American children who will live sicker and die younger than their parents' generation.*

 **ACTIVE LIVING BY DESIGN** Increasing physical activity through community design

Our vision is active Americans in healthy communities.

# Science & Policy Needs

- Need for trans-disciplinary research  
(e.g., forest, leisure, health scientists)
- Integrated Studies & Projects (research, education, outreach)
- Focus energy on rural and urban forest settings
- My Hope? Elevated international discussion and study of health benefits can leverage support for our national forest & science policy goals

Thank You!

